

Biden decries Trump backers' 'dagger at throat' of democracy

By MARY CLARE JALONICK,
LISA MASCARO and ZEKE MILLER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden accused Donald Trump and his supporters of holding a "dagger at the throat of democracy" in a forceful speech

Thursday marking the anniversary of the deadly attack on the U.S. Capitol. He warned that though it didn't succeed, the insurrection remains a serious threat to America's system of government.

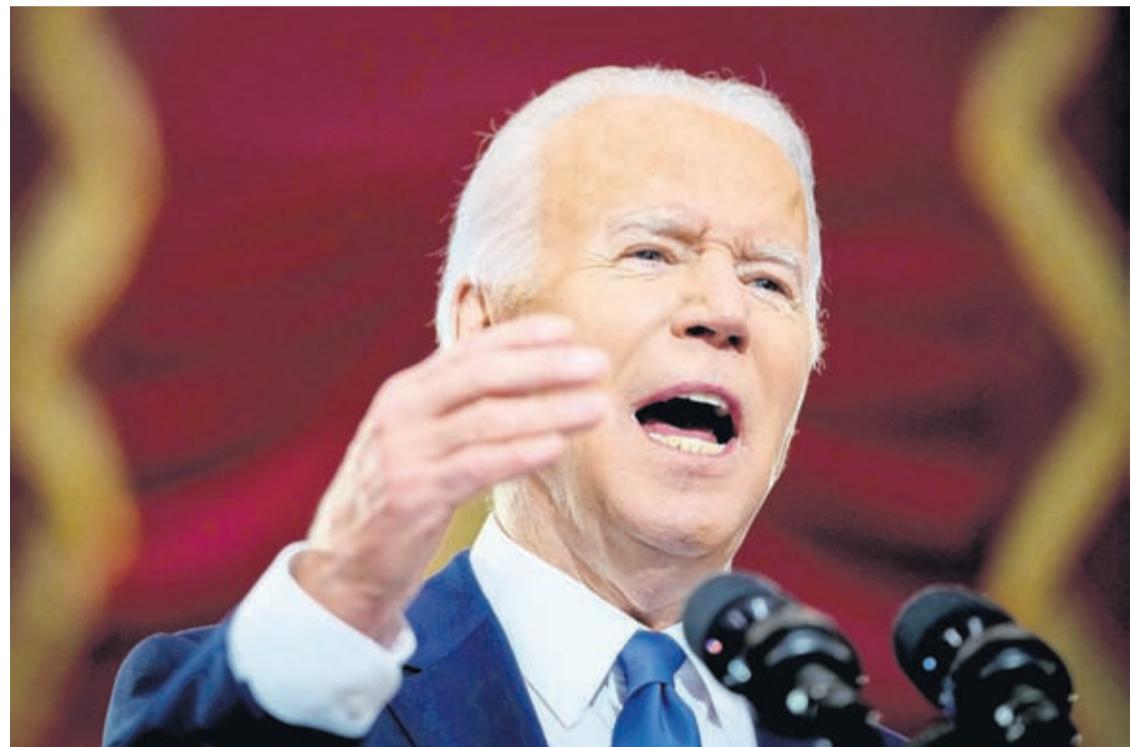
Biden's criticism was blistering of the defeated president whom he blamed for the assault that has fundamentally changed Congress and the nation, and raised global concerns about the future of Ameri-

can democracy.

"For the first time in our history, a president not just lost an election, he tried to prevent the peaceful transfer of power as a violent mob breached the Capitol," Biden said. "You can't love your country only when you win."

His voice booming at times, filling the ornate Statuary Hall where rioters had laid siege, the president called on Americans to remember what they saw Jan. 6 with their own eyes: the mob attacking police, breaking windows, a Confederate flag inside the Capitol, gallows erected outside threatening to hang the vice president — all while Trump sat at the White House watching it on TV.

Continued on next page



President Joe Biden speaks from Statuary Hall at the U.S. Capitol to mark the one year anniversary of the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol by supporters loyal to then-President Donald Trump, Thursday, Jan. 6, 2022, in Washington.

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Continued from Front

"The former president's supporters are trying to rewrite history. They want you to see Election Day as the day of insurrection and the riot that took place here on January 6 as a true expression of the will of the people. Can you think of a more twisted way to look at this country, to look at America? I cannot."

The president's remarks launched the start of day-long remembrance, drawing a contrast between the truth of what happened and the false narratives that persist about the Capitol assault, including the continued refusal by many Republicans to affirm that Biden won the 2020 election.

"We must be absolutely clear about what is true and what is a lie," Biden said. "The former president of the United States of America has spread a web of lies about the 2020 election."

He said: "We are in a battle for the soul of America."

"I did not seek this fight, brought to this Capitol one year from today. But I will not shrink from it either. I will stand in this breach, I will defend this nation. I will allow no one to place a dagger at the throat of this democracy."

Republican leaders and lawmakers largely stayed away from the day's events, dismissing them as overly politicized — some continuing to spread false claims about the election. From Florida, Trump showed no signs of letting go, and in fact revived his unfounded attack on the elections. He accepted no responsibility for egging on the crowd that day. Instead, in one of several statements Thursday, he said Biden was trying to "further divide America. This political theater is all just a distraction."

Even among congressio-



A large group of police arrive at the Capitol, Thursday, Jan. 6, 2022, in Washington. President Joe Biden and members of Congress are solemnly marking the first anniversary of the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol insurrection.

nal Republicans who condemned the attack in the days afterward, most have stayed loyal to the former president.

"What brazen politicization of January 6 by President Biden," tweeted Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., a sometimes Trump confidant. Others, including Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, were absent, with a contingent attending the funeral for a former colleague Sen. Johnny Isakson in Georgia. Far-right Reps. Marjorie Taylor Greene and Matt Gaetz stood by their refusal to certify Biden's election that day — "We're ashamed of nothing," Gaetz said on a podcast.

The division is a stark reminder of the rupture between the two parties, worsening since hundreds of Trump's supporters violently pushed past police, used their fists and flagpoles to break through the windows of the Capitol and interrupted the certification of Biden's victory.

Rep. Liz Cheney, chair of the House committee investigating the attack and one of the few GOP law-

makers attending the Capitol ceremonies, warned that "the threat continues." Trump, she said, "continues to make the same claims that he knows caused violence on January 6."

"Unfortunately, too many in my own party are embracing the former president, are looking the other way or minimizing the danger," she told NBC's "Today." "That's how democracies die. We simply cannot let that happen."

She was joined by her father Dick Cheney, the former vice president and now a respected Republican Party elder, who was greeted warmly by several Democrats. He stood with her, the only Republicans seen, for a moment of silence on the House floor. He said in a statement: "I am deeply disappointed at the failure of many members of my party to recognize the grave nature of the January 6 attacks and the ongoing threat to our nation."

The Senate also convened a moment of silence.

Democrats investigating the insurrection plan to spend the coming months

telling the American people exactly what happened last Jan. 6 with a series of public hearings.

Biden and his administration have come under criticism from some in his party for not forcibly explaining to Americans the ways democracy is at risk, or pushing Congress hard enough to pass election and voting rights legislation that is stalled by a filibuster in the Senate. Barack Obama, the former president, said "nothing is more important" on the anniversary than ensuring the right to vote.

"While the broken windows have been repaired and many of the rioters have been brought to justice, the truth is that our democracy is at greater risk today than it was back then," Obama said in a statement.

Biden's address, and that of Vice President Kamala Harris who is leading the administration's efforts on the voting and elections legislation, appeared as a direct response to critics.

"We must pass voting rights bills," said Harris, addressing those gathered. "We cannot sit on the sidelines. We must unite in defense of our

democracy."

On the House floor, where many members were evacuated and some were trapped as the rioters tried to break in, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi drew on history with a hope that Americans would turn to their "better angels" to resolve differences. She delivered private remarks to Hill staff who, as she told The Associated Press in an interview Wednesday, had stayed a year ago to "protect our democracy."

Biden's sharp message and the Republicans' distance from it come as lawmakers are adjusting to the new normal on Capitol Hill — the growing tensions that many worry will result in more violence or, someday, a legitimate election being overturned. Democrats and a handful of Republicans feel a desperate urgency to connect to a public in which some have come to believe Trump's lies that the election was stolen from him and that the attack wasn't violent at all.

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research showed that 3 in 10 Republicans say the attack was not violent, and about another 3 in 10 say it was somewhat violent. Around two-thirds of Americans described the day as very or extremely violent, including about 9 in 10 Democrats.

As Biden directed blame toward the former president, the percentage of Americans who blame Trump for the Jan. 6 riot has grown slightly over the past year, with 57% saying he bears significant responsibility for what took place. In an AP-NORC poll taken in the days after the attack, 50% said that.

Trump's claims of widespread election fraud were rejected by the courts and refuted by his own Justice Department. □

Associated Press

Hunters kill 20 Yellowstone wolves that roamed out of park

By MATTHEW BROWN

Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) —

Twenty of Yellowstone National Park's renowned gray wolves roamed from the park and were shot by hunters in recent months — the most killed by hunting in a single season since the predators were reintroduced to the region more than 25 years ago, according to park officials.

Fifteen wolves were shot after roaming across the park's northern border into Montana, according to figures released to The Associated Press. Five more died in Idaho and Wyoming.

Park officials said in a statement to AP that the deaths mark "a significant setback for the species' long-term viability and for wolf research."

One pack — the Phantom Lake Pack — is now considered "eliminated" after most or all of its members were killed over a two-month span beginning in October, according to the park.

An estimated 94 wolves remain in Yellowstone. But with months to go in Montana's wolf hunting season — and wolf trapping season just getting underway



This Jan. 24, 2018, photo released by the National Park Service shows a wolf from the Wapiti Lake pack silhouetted by a nearby hot spring in Yellowstone National Park, Wyo.

— park officials said they expect more wolves will die after roaming from Yellowstone, where hunting is prohibited.

Park Superintendent Cam Sholly first raised concerns about wolves dying last September near the park's border and more recently urged Republican Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte to shut down hunting and trapping in the area.

Sholly cited "the extraordinary number of Yellow-

stone wolves already killed this hunting season," in a Dec. 16 letter to Gianforte that was released to AP under a freedom of information request.

Gianforte, an avid hunter and trapper, did not directly address the request to halt hunting in a Wednesday response to Sholly. "Once a wolf exits the park and enters lands in the State of Montana it may be harvested pursuant to regulations established by the

(state wildlife) Commission under Montana law," Gianforte wrote.

Gianforte last year received a warning from a Montana game warden after trapping and shooting a radio-collared wolf about 10 miles (16 kilometers) north of the park without taking a state-mandated trapper education course.

In his response to Sholly, the governor said Montana protects against overhunting through rules adopted

Associated Press

by the wildlife commission, which can review hunting seasons if harvest levels top a certain threshold.

For southwestern Montana, including areas bordering the park, that threshold is 82 wolves. Sixty-three have been killed in that region to date this season, out of 149 wolves killed statewide, according to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The most recent wolf killing along the Montana-Yellowstone border happened on New Year's Day. Wolf trapping in the area opened Dec. 21. Under new rules, Montana trappers can now use animal carcasses or other bait to lure wolves into leghold traps or snares.

"Allowances for trapping and especially baiting are a major concern, especially if these tactics lure wolves out of the park," Yellowstone spokesperson Morgan Warthin said.

Urged by Republican lawmakers, Montana wildlife officials last year loosened hunting and trapping rules for wolves statewide and eliminated longstanding wolf quota limits in areas bordering the park. The quotas allowed only a few wolves to be killed along the border annually. □

Cuomo due in court virtually after DA drops fondling case

By MICHAEL HILL
Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Andrew Cuomo will be required to appear virtually for a court session Friday as a judge considers a prosecutor's request to dismiss a fondling case against the former New York governor. Albany County District Attorney David Soares asked Judge Holly Trexler on Tuesday to dismiss the misdemeanor complaint, just three days before Cuomo's scheduled arraignment. Trexler notified prosecution and defense lawyers Thursday that they will be required to appear virtually, along with Cuomo.

Soares said he would not be able to prove former Cuomo aide Brittany Comisso's allegation that the then-governor groped her

in the executive mansion in late 2020.

In a letter to the judge, Soares said "statutory elements of New York law make this case impossible to prove." He added that multiple government inquiries into Cuomo's conduct had created "technical and procedural hurdles" regarding prosecutors' obligations to disclose evidence to the defense. Comisso said Cuomo reached up her blouse and grabbed her breast while they were alone in his Executive Mansion office.

Her testimony was included in a report, released in August by Democratic state Attorney General Letitia James, that concluded Cuomo sexually harassed 11 women.

Cuomo announced his res-

ignation a week after the report's release, though he attacked it as inaccurate and unfair.

Cuomo has denied the charge, telling state the attorney general's investigators "it would be an act of insanity" to do that.

Cuomo attorney Rita Glavin argued in a motion to dismiss the charge Thursday that since Soares declined to prosecute, "the Court should dismiss the case to avoid intruding upon the role of the prosecutor." She also criticized Albany County Sheriff Craig Apple for filing the misdemeanor forcible touching complaint against Cuomo in October without consulting with Soares or herself. Soares, a fellow Democrat, similarly complained at the time that it was filed with-



In this image taken from video made available by the Office of the Governor of New York, Rita Glavin, attorney for Gov. Andrew Cuomo, speaks in Albany, N.Y., on Tuesday, Aug. 10, 2021, with a photo of Brittany Comisso, an executive assistant on Cuomo's staff.

Associated Press

out his knowledge and was "potentially defective."

In her motion, Glavin said Soares' office had access to information favorable to Cuomo that Apple was not

privy to and that James did not mention in her report. Glavin did not specify what that information was.

Apple has maintained the case was solid. □

Winter storm blanketing parts of South with snow, ice

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A winter storm blanketed parts of the South with snow, freezing rain and sleet Thursday, tying up roads in Tennessee and Kentucky as the system tracked a path through Appalachia toward the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast.

The storm began hitting greater Nashville on Thursday morning. About 4 to 6 inches had fallen across a large swath of Middle Tennessee by early afternoon, with snow possibly continuing for a few more hours, said National Weather Service meteorologist Scott Unger in Nashville. Freezing rain and sleet coated areas around the Tennessee-Alabama state border, Unger said.

Authorities urged people to travel only when necessary, as Metro Nashville Police reported accidents and other driving woes that snarled and slowed several roads. Police in the city reported dozens of wrecks on the road by the early afternoon. A section of Interstate 40 was plugged up due to a tractor trailer fuel spill crash, according to police, just one of the issues



Traffic along west bound Interstate 40 near mile marker 192 is backed up due to heavy snow Thursday, Jan. 6, 2022 in Nashville, Tenn.

bottlenecking interstates in the city.

Along the Kentucky border, authorities in Montgomery County, Tennessee, were dealing with dozens of crashes as well, including a wreck that killed one person involving a commercial vehicle on Interstate 24, according to Tennessee Highway Patrol spokesperson Lt. Bill Miller.

Tennessee Department of Transportation regional spokesperson Rebekah Hammonds tweeted Thursday that the agency is "clearing as much as we can but issues will continue as snow continues to fall and temps drop." With temperatures expected to plummet overnight, everything on the ground is going to freeze and create

treacherous road conditions Friday, Unger said. Schools around the region canceled classes, including a closure through Friday for Nashville's public school students. Gov. Bill Lee, meanwhile, closed state offices across Tennessee, and Nashville International Airport reported plenty of canceled and delayed flights.

Associated Press

The storm also hit Memphis and surrounding Shelby County, where school systems canceled classes and municipal courts were closed, while crews were monitoring conditions of city streets. Snow began falling mid-morning, after freezing rain and sleet fell on the city earlier in the day. Some flights were likewise canceled at Memphis International Airport.

Snow was falling in Kentucky, where some areas had already received more than a half-foot by early afternoon, National Weather Service meteorologist Ron Steve said.

The largest snowfall so far was 7 to 8 inches around Elizabethtown. Lexington had 4 to 5 inches, he said. Far western Kentucky had about 3 inches, and snowfall was tapering off.

In Elizabethtown, officials said a pileup of 20 to 30 cars in snowy conditions Thursday afternoon closed both lanes of the Western Kentucky Parkway. And both lanes of U.S. Route 25 in southcentral Kentucky were temporarily blocked by multiple crashes, state police said. □

Feds want marathon bomber's COVID payment to go to victims



This file photo released April 19, 2013, by the Federal Bureau of Investigation shows Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, convicted and sentenced to death for carrying out the April 15, 2013, Boston Marathon bombing attack that killed three people and injured more than 260.

**By MARK PRATT
Associated Press**

Federal prosecutors want convicted Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev to use a \$1,400 COVID-19 stimulus pay-

ment he received as well as other money held in his inmate trust account to help pay the millions of dollars he was ordered to pay his victims. In a filing Wednesday, the

U.S. attorney's office in Boston asked a judge to order the federal Bureau of Prisons to turn the money over to the Clerk of the Court "as payment towards his outstanding criminal monetary penalties, including unpaid special assessment and restitution."

In addition to the stimulus payment, Tsarnaev, who's being held at a maximum security prison in Florence, Colorado, has received money from dozens of sources during his incarceration, including the federal public defender's office and regular payments from individuals living in Indiana, New Jersey and Maryland, according to the filing by acting U.S. Attorney for Massachusetts, Nathaniel Mendell.

As of Dec. 22, Tsarnaev had \$3,885 and change in

his account.

He was convicted in 2015 of 30 charges in connection with the 2013 bombing at the Boston Marathon finish line that killed three spectators and injured more than 260 others. In 2016 he was ordered to pay a \$3,000 special assessment and more than \$101 million in criminal restitution.

So far, Tsarnaev has paid a little more than \$2,200 of that, all toward the assessment, according to the filing.

And although he has not paid a penny in restitution, Tsarnaev has used his inmate account to pay his siblings for items such as "gifts," "support," and "books," according to the filing.

"The United States submits that the requested relief is

reasonable and appropriate in this instance, especially in light of the defendant prioritizing payments to his siblings over the victims of his crimes," prosecutors wrote.

An email seeking comment was left with Tsarnaev's attorneys.

Tsarnaev was originally sentenced to death, but the federal appeals court in Boston threw out the death sentence in July 2020 because, it said, the judge at his trial did not do enough to ensure the jury would not be biased against him. He is currently serving a life sentence.

The Biden administration has asked the Supreme Court to reinstate Tsarnaev's death sentence. The high court heard arguments in October but has yet to rule. □

Christian world marks Epiphany with series of celebrations

By FRANCES D'EMILIO and MEHMET GUZEL

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Christians around the world on Thursday marked Epiphany, known as Three Kings Day for Catholics and the Baptism of Christ for the Orthodox, with a series of celebrations.

Pope Francis used a Mass at St. Peter's Basilica to decry consumerism, parades were held in Spain the night before, and Orthodox believers watched swimmers plunge into icy waters despite the pandemic to retrieve crosses.

Francis encouraged people to shake off consumeristic "tyranny" and crises of faith in lives and societies and instead find the courage to work for justice and brotherhood in societies dominated by what he called the "sinister logic of power."

The Catholic feast day of Epiphany recalls the visit of three Magi, or wise men, to the infant Jesus, and their sense of wonder at the encounter.

In his homily, Francis urged people to move past the "barriers of habit, beyond banal consumerism, beyond a drab and dreary



Men and young boys enter the icy Tundzha river to celebrate Epiphany in the town of Kalofer, Thursday, Jan. 6, 2022.

Associated Press

faith, beyond the fear of becoming involved and serving others and the common good."

He said that "we find ourselves living in communities that crave everything, have everything, yet all too often feel nothing but emptiness in their hearts."

Decrying what he defined as "the tyranny of needs," Francis said: "Let us not give apathy and resignation the power to drive us into

a cheerless and banal existence."

In remarks from an Apostolic Palace window overlooking St. Peter's Square, Francis later also noted holiday celebrations by other Christians and praised various Epiphany traditions.

"Today thoughts go to the brothers and the sisters of the Eastern churches, both Catholic and Orthodox, who tomorrow celebrate the birthday of the Lord,"

the pontiff said.

In Istanbul, the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, held an Epiphany Mass before leading a traditional Blessing of the Waters ceremony during which swimmers competed to retrieve a floating cross thrown into the sea.

Bartholomew, who recently recovered from COVID-19 and underwent heart sur-

gery in November, threw a wooden cross into the Golden Horn, before 10 men jumped into the waterway to retrieve it. Members of Istanbul's small Greek Orthodox community, wearing masks, looked on.

This year, the cross was recovered by 36-year-old Galip Yavuz, who said it was his fifth attempt at retrieving it.

Bartholomew is considered first among equals among Orthodox patriarchs, although only a few thousand Greeks now live in Turkey. He also directly controls several Greek Orthodox churches around the world, including the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

His patriarchate in Istanbul dates from the Orthodox Greek Byzantine Empire, which collapsed when the Muslim Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople, today's Istanbul, in 1453.

Similar blessing of the waters ceremonies were held in predominantly Orthodox Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania, with swimmers competing against each other to grasp a floating cross thrown into seas, rivers or lakes. □

China lashes out at U.S. over support for Lithuania

BEIJING (AP) — China lashed out at the United States on Thursday over its support for the European nation of Lithuania in its feud with Beijing over relations with Taiwan.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Washington was using the Baltic state to "use Taiwan to contain China."

"The U.S. side has defended Lithuania's erroneous act of creating 'one China, one Taiwan,' and attempted to put together a small clique condoning the Taiwan independence forces," Wang said at a daily briefing.

His remarks came after the top U.S. and German diplomats on Wednesday said Chinese pressure against Lithuania was unwarrant-

ed. Lithuania broke with diplomatic custom last year by letting the Taiwanese office in Vilnius bear the name Taiwan, instead of Chinese Taipei, which most other countries use to avoid offending Beijing. China considers Taiwan part of its territory with no right to diplomatic recognition, and Lithuania's move infuriated Beijing, which withdrew its ambassador to Vilnius and expelled the Lithuanian ambassador to Beijing. Lithuania has since closed its embassy in Beijing.

Constant Chinese pressure has reduced the number of Taiwan's formal diplomatic allies to just 14, although it has robust informal relations with the U.S., Germany and most other major nations.

Lithuania, a country of 2.8 million people, is a member of the European Union and NATO and a close U.S. ally. Wang also blasted Taiwan's move to create a \$200 million investment fund for Lithuania to offset China's economic reprisals as "dollar diplomacy," adding that "soliciting foreign support to Taiwan independence will only lead to a dead end." Taiwan's office, a de facto embassy, opened in November, and Lithuania is planning to open its own trade office in Taiwan later this year.

Taiwan said it is ready to help Lithuania in resupplying trade, with the island saying goods are stopped from entering China.

"There are more than 120 sea containers — at least



The closed Lithuanian Embassy is seen in Beijing, Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021.

Associated Press

1.5 million euro worth — blocked by Beijing. We're ready to take all of those and help Lithuanian companies," Huang said.

In his remarks after a meeting with his German coun-

terpart, Annalena Baerbock, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, "We have immediate concern about the government of China's attempts to bully Lithuania." □

Dozens of protesters, 12 police dead in Kazakhstan protests

By JIM HEINTZ

MOSCOW (AP) — Security forces killed dozens of protesters and 12 police died during extraordinarily violent demonstrations in Kazakhstan that saw government buildings stormed and set ablaze, authorities said Thursday. One police officer was found beheaded in escalating unrest that poses a growing challenge to authoritarian rule in the Central Asian nation.

Despite the severe response by authorities, protesters took the streets again in the country's largest city, Almaty, a day after breaking into the presidential residence and the mayor's office there. Police were also out in force, including in the capital of Nur-Sultan, which was reportedly quiet, and Russian troops were on their way.

Video from the Russian news agency Tass showed police firing intensely on a street near Republic Square, where demonstrators had gathered, though they could not be seen in the footage. Late Thursday, Tass said protesters had been swept from the square but that sporadic gunfire in the area continued.

Earlier, Russia's Sputnik news service reported that shots were fired as police surrounded one group of about 200 protesters in the city.

In the unrest on Wednesday, "dozens of attackers were liquidated," police spokeswoman Saltanat Azirbek told state news channel Khabar-24, using a term common to describe the killing of people thought to be extremists by law enforcement. Twelve police officers were killed and 353 injured, according to city officials cited by the channel. The Interior Ministry said 2,000 people have been arrested.

Tens of thousands of people, some reportedly carrying clubs and shields, have taken to the streets in recent days in the worst protests the country has seen since gaining independence from the Soviet Union three decades ago.



Riot police walk to block demonstrators gathering during a protest in Almaty, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022.

Associated Press

Although the demonstrations began over a near-doubling of prices for a type of vehicle fuel, their size and rapid spread suggest they reflect wider discontent in the country that has been under the rule of the same party since independence.

The government on Thursday announced a 180-day price cap on vehicle fuel and a moratorium on raising utility rates — an attempt to address the economic issues that catalyzed the protests, though it was unclear what, if any, effect the moves would have.

The president has vacillated between attempts at mollifying the protesters, including accepting the resignation of his government, and promising harsh measures to quell the unrest, which he blamed on "terrorist bands."

Worries that a broader crackdown could be on the horizon grew after he called on a Russia-led military alliance for help. Severe interruptions to internet service and cellphone service also raised concern and made it difficult — sometimes impossible — for news of what was happening inside Kazakhstan to get out.

The airports in Almaty and one other city have also been shut.

The military alliance, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, said early Thursday that it would send peacekeeper troops to Kazakhstan at Tokayev's request.

The operation is the first military action by the CSTO — an indication that Kazakhstan's neighbors, particularly Russia, are concerned that the unrest could spread.

Russia and Kazakhstan share close relations and a 7600-kilometer (4700-mile) border, much of it along open steppes. Russia's manned space-launch facility, the Baikonur Cosmodrome, is in Kazakhstan. The size and duties of the force have not been specified. Russia has already begun sending forces, according to the CSTO, which also includes Kazakhstan, Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. But

Kyrgyzstan's presidential spokesman, Erbol Sutanbaev, said his country's contingent must be approved by parliament and said that the troops would not take actions involving demonstrators.

It was not immediately clear if any of the Russian forces had arrived in Kazakhstan.

The unrest was also causing worry elsewhere. U.S. Secretary of State Antony

Blinken spoke by telephone with his Kazakh counterpart, Mukhtar Tileuberdi, and "reiterated the United States' full support for Kazakhstan's constitutional institutions and media freedom and advocated for a peaceful, rights-respecting resolution to the crisis," said State Department spokesman Ned Price.

France condemned the violence and called for "de-escalation and responsibility" from all parties involved, including the CSTO.

China is also likely to be concerned. Kazakhstan shares a 1,800 kilometer (1,000 mile)-long border with China's Xinjiang region, where Beijing has launched an all-out campaign to quash separatist sentiment among Muslim minority groups who share cultural, religious and linguistic links with the peoples of Central Asia.

However, at a daily briefing Thursday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin appeared to dismiss any possibility of China becoming involved in the current crisis, in line with Beijing's strict official non-interventionist policy.

"What is happening in Kazakhstan is the country's internal affair (and) we believe that the Kazakh authorities can solve the issue properly," he said. □

Tokayev has imposed a two-week state of emergency for the whole country, including an overnight curfew and a ban on religious services. That is a blow to Kazakhstan's sizable Orthodox Christian population who observe Christmas on Friday.

Of the five Central Asian republics that gained independence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan is by far the largest and the wealthiest, spanning a territory the size of Western Europe and sitting atop colossal reserves of oil, natural gas, uranium and precious metals. In addition to its long border with Russia, it also shares one with China, and its oil and mineral wealth make it strategically and economically important.

But despite Kazakhstan's natural riches and a solid middle class, financial hardship is widespread, and discontent over poor living conditions is strong in some parts of the country. Many Kazakhs also chafe at the dominance of the ruling party, which holds more than 80% of the seats in parliament.

The protests appear to have no identifiable leader or demands. Much of the anger displayed in recent days was directed not at Tokayev, but at Nursultan Nazarbayev, the country's first president who continued to wield enormous influence after his 2019 resignation. Protesters shouted "Shal ket!" ("Old man go"), an apparent reference to Nazarbayev, who dominated Kazakhstan's politics and whose rule was marked by a moderate cult of personality.

At the start of the year, prices for the fuel called liquefied petroleum gas roughly doubled as the government moved away from price controls as part of efforts to move to a market economy.

The price cap for LPG announced by the government Thursday is 75 tenge (17 cents) per liter; at the start of the year, the average price was about 120 tenge (27 cents). □

Cuban women push to join business opening, cite obstacles

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ

Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Cuba was an early leader in recognizing women's rights and equality after Fidel Castro's revolution in 1959. Women were put in positions of power and responsibility, and the government legalized abortion and created day care centers, steps that allowed women to join the workforce alongside men.

Yet Cuban women who are seeking to take part in the island's gradual opening to independent small businesses say they are facing unique challenges put up by a patriarchal society that favors men and male-owned businesses.

At a recent business expo for women entrepreneurs, Natalhie Fonseca, owner of Carrete, an online enterprise she started to make and sell handmade decorations for children's rooms, said women are held back by Cuban society's expectations that they also be homemakers.

Fonseca said she rises at dawn, washes, cooks, takes care of her two girls, cleans,



Natalhie Fonseca makes soft toys for children that she sells under her brand "Carrete" in Havana, Cuba, Sunday, Dec. 26, 2021.

and works part-time in her husband's coffee shop, in addition to working on her own business.

"Twenty-four in a day are not enough," she lamented. "If we had a little help." Alynn Torres, a researcher on gender issues at the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, said that while Cuba "made a very big leap" in the 1960s and '70s in bringing women into the workforce,

its efforts have stagnated. She said 60% of Cuba's university graduates are women, but they mostly end up in the least paid economic sectors, such as education or social assistance. Women account for only a third of self-employed workers in Cuba, whose economy is still largely state-run businesses, and they make up just over 20% of the owners of small- and medium-size

Associated Press

businesses, according to official figures.

"Conscious and systematic state actions, not only words, are absolutely essential to ensure the greater participation of women," Torres said.

She said there should be more credit available for women business owners and more done to care for children, the sick and the elderly, which are responsi-

bilities that now fall mainly on Cuba's women.

Battered by low economic productivity as well as the obstacles presented by the U.S. embargo, Cuba's government has gradually opened the private sector during the last decade.

Then President Raúl Castro added licenses to open private businesses, legalized real estate transactions and the sale of unused land, and made credit more accessible, among other measures.

According to official figures, in 2020 there were 602,000 self-employed Cubans, some of whom have started their own businesses. About 210,000 of them were women.

In September, current President Miguel Díaz-Canel approved the creation of privately owned businesses — something that was once inconceivable after authorities closed all privately owned business on the island in 1968.

In the five months since, licenses have been granted for 1,014 additional private businesses, 22% of them for women. □

European court declines to take pro-gay marriage cake case

LONDON (AP) — A top European court declined Thursday to rule in a high-profile discrimination case centered on an activist's request to have a cake decorated with the "Sesame Street" characters Bert and Ernie and the words "Support Gay Marriage."

The European Court of Human Rights said the case was inadmissible because activist Gareth Lee had failed to "exhaust domestic remedies" in his case against a Northern Ireland bakery.

It was the latest ruling in a long-running legal battle that began in 2014 when Ashers Baking Co. refused to make the cake Lee wanted.

The owners argued they were happy to bake goods for anyone but would not put messages on their products at odds with their Christian beliefs.

Lee said he was frustrated the case was thrown out on what he called "a technicality" and said that freedom of expression "must equally apply to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people."

He originally ordered the cake to support a campaign to allow same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland. The campaign succeeded when Britain's Parliament stepped in to bring the region into line with the rest of the country. Two women who tied the knot in February 2020 became the first gay couple to wed in Northern Ireland.

Britain's Supreme Court ruled in 2018 that the bakery's refusal to make the cake Lee ordered did not amount to discrimination, reversing a lower court's ruling.

Lee then took his case to the Strasbourg, France-based

human rights court, arguing that the U.K. Supreme Court decision breached the European Convention on Human Rights.

In a written ruling, the rights court said it could not rule because Lee had not raised the convention in his U.K. court actions.

"Because he had failed to exhaust domestic remedies, the application was inadmissible," the Court of Human Rights said.

LGBTQ support group the Rainbow Project called the ruling disappointing.

"When a commercial business is providing services to the public, they cannot discriminate against their customers or clients on any grounds protected by equality law," John O'Doherty, the group's director, said.

He said the 2018 U.K. Supreme Court ruling created legal uncertainty through-



Gay rights activist Gareth Lee, center, leaves Laganside court, Northern Ireland, Thursday March 26, 2015.

Associated Press

out the country.

"Unfortunately, with today's decision, that uncertainty will remain," he said.

The Christian Institute, which had backed the legal fight of the McArthur family that runs Ashers Baking Co., welcomed the ruling, which a spokesman called "good news for free

speech, good news for Christians, and good news for the McArthurs."

"The UK Supreme Court engaged at length with the human rights arguments in this case and upheld the McArthurs' rights to freedom of expression and religion," spokesman Simon Calvert said. □

Harbour House Aruba officially open! 80 % sold, construction in final phase: Harbour House Aruba is ready for you!

ORANJESTAD — It was the official Grand Opening of Harbour House Aruba last Thursday, June 10th. The residence consisting of 94 units is located in the former Mar Azul building, right in the heart of Oranjestad. The two brothers Irwin J. Perret-Gentil and Alberto Perret-Gentil from PERING, one of the largest, privately-owned Real Estate and construction firms in Venezuela and Aruba, officially opened their new jewel in the presence of the invitees.

Harbour House Aruba is the

ultimate smart investment or personal living space. A state-of-the-art lobby, an ocean-view gym, bar service, rooftop with 360 degrees view of Oranjestad, on-site parking, 24-hours security and a top floor lounge area with Jacuzzi's. Cherry on the cake: an infinity pool with a panorama on the harbour.

Harbour House Aruba offers cosmopolitan living in a beach-chic environment. The residence is fast-selling their studios, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units for many reasons but in

a nutshell we can name: great location, great value for your money and great quality. To see exactly what still is available you may check the website which shows you a map with sold and open units. Updates on construction are also on forehand. When you live abroad stopping by to check upon your purchase is not that simple, yet with the monthly updates on their website, it is a lot easier.

Hottest condo in town

Aruba Today talked to one of the owners from New



York: "This is going to be the hottest condo building on the island because this is the very first thing people see when they arrive here by cruise ship and it is the only one combining the ocean, port and city. We feel so happy to be the owner here, also, the organization is amazing. We are being accommodated in every way, the attention you get is extraordinary."

Boardwalk

Living here includes being part of Oranjestad and all its benefits. Around the Harbour House building a boardwalk is constructed allowing you to stroll along the waterfront and enjoy a drink on a terrace or dive into the art gallery, souvenir store or even have dinner facing the atmospheric harbour of Oranjestad.

materials and amenities. If you are not on the island the website can help you out and the sales office is happy to send you all needed documentation for you to orientate. When agreed upon the unit you sign an agreement and move forward with the down payment which is \$ 50.000. At receipt of that amount the sales is closed and the price will not change. You know what you get and will not be surprised by price changes. The payment agreements after the deposit will be discussed and are flexible. Harbour House Aruba assist also in financing by banks.

For more information: <https://harbourhousearuba.com>. □



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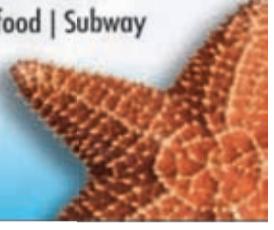
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Air Force gets unmanned MQ-9 Reaper in February

SAVANETA — The Royal Air Force will have the MQ-9 Reaper at its disposal in February 2022. It involves 4 ground stations and 4 unmanned reconnaissance aircraft. The aircraft can collect data and information from the air.

The Ministry of Defense is testing the unarmed system on Curaçao for the time being. This has to do with the favorable weather conditions and availability of air space. The Reaper can also already be used for Defence tasks in the Caribbean. For example in the



support of civil authorities or for detection and surveillance. There is partial co-operation with the United

States, such as in counter-drug operations.

The aircraft and 2 ground

stations are stationed at Hato airport. The 2 other ground stations are at Leeuwarden Air Base. Here, the images from the Caribbean are analyzed. The MQ-9 will eventually have Leeuwarden as its home base.

The Reaper contains sensors that can observe and collect information for a long time on land and above sea, without a pilot on board. Thanks to satellite control, the aircraft can be operated worldwide. The system is fully in line with the Ministry of Defence's desire to operate on the basis of information-driven military action.□

Adaptation of check-in time for all group color codes

ORANJESTAD — As informed by Aruba Airport Authority N.V. (AAA), the company that manages and operates Aeropuerto Internacional Reina Beatrix (AUA Airport) as of December 1, 2021, all US departing passengers are allowed access to the check-in terminal based on groups and color codes for each group at the airport as part of the "Passenger Flow Control" for all passengers to the USA.

Further adaptations have been made to make the process more agile and to better indicate the 3 hour time frame between scheduled departure time and allowed check-time. The time frame for check-in for the YELLOW group has now been adapted to be between 08:00 – 12:00 hrs (8 AM – 12 noon). The time frame for the BLUE group has also been fur-



ther adapted to now be allowed to check-in between 12:00 and 14:00 hrs (12 noon and 2 PM). The ORANGE check-in time frame has also been adapted to now be between 14:00 hrs and 16:00 hrs (2 PM – 4 PM).

The Passenger Flow Control concept entails that passenger are allowed to enter the check in facilities based on separate groups (Yellow, Blue and Orange) established by the scheduled airline departure times. Passengers will thus receive a dedicated times-

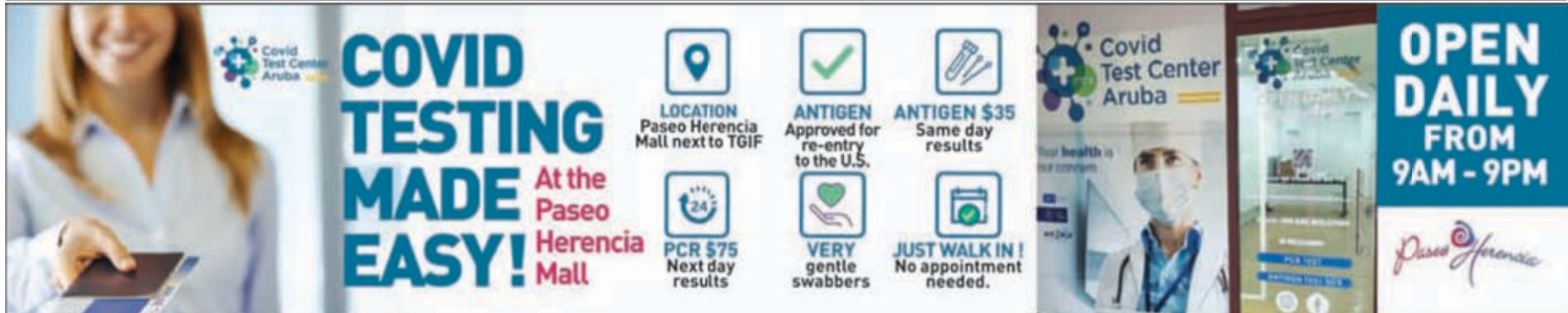
lot to enter the terminal as indicated in table below.

This dedicated timeslot is determined for visitors based on the information provided in the ED (Electronic Disembarkation) Card where information on the departure flight will also have to be submitted. Residents travelling out of Aruba to the US should take their scheduled departure time into account to deter-

mine at what time they are allowed to check-in (not earlier than 3 hours before that time of departure).

AUA Airport will have ambassadors at the entry doors to actively control the time slots per passenger. Early passengers will have to wait outside for their correct time slot.□

ARUBA AIRPORT Departure Check-In Times Quadrant by Group			
GROUP	YELLOW	BLUE	ORANGE
DEPARTURE TIME	Between 11:00 - 15:00	Between 15:00 - 17:00	Between 17:00 - 18:00
CHECK-IN	Between 08:00 - 12:00	Between 12:00 - 14:00	Between 14:00 - 16:00*
<i>Note: For check-in times, please maintain this at 3 hours prior to scheduled departure time</i>			
<i>For example: scheduled departure time is 13:00 hrs = check-in time 10:00 hrs</i>			
<i>scheduled departure time is 15:00 hrs = check-in time 12:00 hrs</i>			
<i>scheduled departure time is 17:00 hrs = check-in time 14:00 hrs</i>			
<i>scheduled departure time is 18:00 hrs = check-in time 15:00 hrs*</i>			
<i>*For flights that are scheduled to depart between 17:00 hrs and 18:00 hrs, those check-in counters will close 60 to 75 minutes before the scheduled departure time. As such code ORANGE has a check-in time frame between 14:00 hrs - 16:00 hrs (2PM - 4PM).</i>			
<i>Period: December 1, 2021 - March 12, 2022</i>			
<i>If flight is delayed, please maintain your scheduled departure time</i>			



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Papillon: the butterfly effect of magnificent food

PALM BEACH — Do you remember the film "Papillon" starring Steve McQueen? Papillon restaurant is the island's example where 'life imitates art.' The décor, especially the restrooms, was inspired by the movie. For more than a decade this restaurant has built a reputation with the fusion of classic French cuisine, Dutch and Caribbean flavors. Welcome in the world of wonders where ambiance, taste and service come together and you feel you are being welcomed in the home of the owner and her team.

"We find it really important that our guests have fun; can relax while listening to live music while their taste buds are being tickled by France, The Netherlands and the Caribbean. We offer a unique fusion of dishes and a night not to forget," says owner Tina. She points out that all Covid-protocol is in place here, they are very keen on hygiene and offer outside dining on a cozy, elegant terrace with social distancing in place and right on the high-rise strip.

Fresh oysters, caviar and wild boar

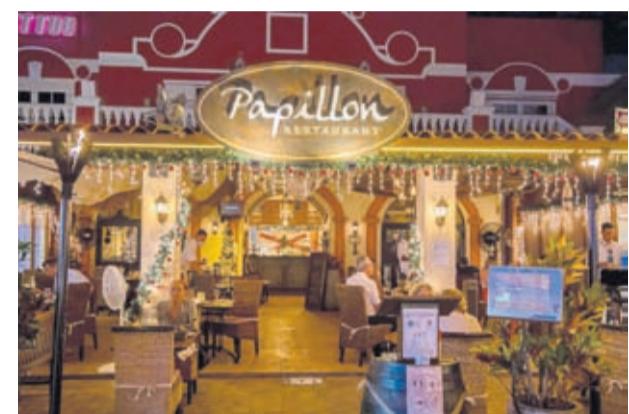
You are on vacation, life is to enjoy! If you want something special, a different flow than the usual then Papillon is the place to go. Foodies are in heaven here with classic French dishes such as Foie Gras, Frog Legs, fresh Oysters coming in on a weekly basis from Holland, Escargots, Dover Sole à la Meunière flown in from Europe and filleted at the table, Duck Breast seared on the skin, roasted and braised Lamb in Balashi beer and slow braised Wild Boar Shank. Do not leave without trying the exclusive recommendation: Caviar! All of this combined with an extensive



wine list from around the world makes Papillon a must-do on your Aruban vacation.

Chef's Sunday

Tina: "Every Sunday Papillon offers you an exquisite meal option: a 4-course Chef's Menu with wine pairing for \$100 per person. With regards to the man in the kitchen we have the best of the best: chef Martijn Liebregts from The Netherlands. He has earned his spurs among others in Amber; one of the best French fine dining restaurant's Hong Kong has to offer, with 2 Michelin- stars and ranked



as the 24th best restaurant in the world. Moving back to Amsterdam he joined the team of former Bib Gourmand restaurant "Wilde Zwijnen", which was awarded the title "The New Dutch Cuisine" by the New York Times. So you see, this is the time to come over and reserve your table."

Let the music play!

We will give you another reason to visit: twice a week you can enjoy the tunes of live sax player Jairo or the famous Marisela who enchants you with her acoustic performance accompanied by percussion only. Wednesdays chill away on the French lounge tunes of DJ Ibarra and Tuesdays Jose Herrera enchants you with his keyboard talent. The musicians interact with the guests, requests can be send in, the live tunes definitely add to the experience.

Vegetarian vibes present

Impressive vegetarian/vegan dishes are set up especially for the guests by the chef and Meredith from Vegan Aruba. "We offer vegan choices that are really good and tasty. Our daily soup is always vegan too." What are you waiting for, make sure to pay a visit to this elegant yet laid-back restaurant while on Aruba. You are most welcome!

Papillon Restaurant is located at The Village across the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort &Casino and within walking distance of all other major hotels.

Make your reservation today at:

info@papillonaruba.com
or call/WhatsApp + 00297 6995400

Open Daily: 5pm – 10.00pm
Early Bird from 5pm – 7pm

For all menus and specials visit the website:
www.papillonaruba.com. □



Papillon
RESTAURANT

Near-empty flights crisscross Europe to secure landing slots

BRUSSELS (AP) — Europe's sky is filling up with near-empty polluting planes that serve little other purpose than safeguarding airlines' valuable time slots at some of the world's most important airports.

The highly contagious omicron variant of COVID-19 has put many off flying, and because of it, getting people and goods from point A to point B has become an afterthought for thousands of flights. It has created strange bedfellows, with environmentalists and major airlines united to cut down on empty or near-empty flights by pressuring the European Union — a pledged global leader in combating climate change — to tweak the rules on airport slots.

"The EU surely is in a climate emergency mode," activist Greta Thunberg tweeted sarcastically this week, linking to a story about Brussels Airlines making unnecessary flights.

The company has said that if the EU doesn't take action, it would have to fly some 3,000 journeys this winter primarily to safeguard its network rights.

German giant Lufthansa said it would have to fly an additional 18,000 "unnecessary" flights through the winter to hold on to landing slots. Even if the holidays brought a big increase in passengers — marked by



In this Tuesday, May 12, 2020 file photo, planes from Brussels Airlines on the tarmac at Brussels Airport in Brussels Tuesday, May 12, 2020.

Associated Press

thousands of flight cancellations that left travelers stranded — the rest of the winter period could be slow as omicron surges worldwide.

Landing and departure slots for popular routes in the biggest airports are an extremely precious commodity in the industry, and to keep them, airlines have to guarantee a high percentage of flights. It is why loss-making flights have to be maintained to ensure companies keep their slots. It was an accepted practice despite the pollution concerns, but the pan-

demic slump in flying put that in question. Normally, airlines had to use 80% of their given slots to preserve their rights, but the EU has cut that to 50% to ensure as few empty or near-empty planes crisscross the sky as possible.

In the U.S., the Federal Aviation Administration has waived similar minimum slot-use rules through March 26, citing the pandemic. Slots are limited at only a handful of U.S. airports, including Kennedy and LaGuardia in New York and Reagan Washington National outside Washingt-

ton.

Just last month, when there were still some hopes the pandemic might finally wane, the European Commission confirmed the 50% rule but said it would be increased to 64% at the end of March.

However, major airlines like Lufthansa, Air France and KLM say they are counting on further flexibility, including further decreasing the threshold level on the time slots.

"More flexibility in the short term is required, not just in summer but also in the current winter schedule," a

Lufthansa statement said. "Without this crisis-related flexibility, airlines are forced to fly with planes almost empty, just to secure their slots."

KLM agreed.

"So if the remainder of the season is very disappointing, as an airline you can find yourself in the situation of either losing slots because you cancel flights or flying with half-empty aircraft. Both situations are not desirable," the Dutch company said.

It puts the EU in a bind. On one hand, it needs to ensure that airport slots are open to fair competition, allowing newcomers to vie for them if they are not used sufficiently, and on the other, it wants to keep polluting planes from flying as much as possible.

EU Transport Commissioner Adina Valean last month acknowledged the threat of omicron to the travel industry, but as of Thursday, she had not announced any new regulations.

Belgian Transport Minister Georges Gilkinet wrote her a stinging letter and was lobbying his EU counterparts to join the initiative and increase pressure.

"The high-level pollution created by these flights runs totally counter to the EU's climate objectives," according to the letter obtained by The Associated Press. □

Chrysler aims to be all electric by 2028

LONDON (AP) — Chrysler plans go all electric by 2028, the latest automaker to announce a shift away from gasoline-powered engines under rising pressure to act on climate change. The company said Wednesday that it will launch its first electric vehicle by 2025.

Chrysler announced its electric plans along with a new AI-enabled vehicle system powered by a battery that it says can travel 350 to 400 miles (563 to 644 kilometers) per charge.

Fiat Chrysler is part of Europe's Stellantis, the parent company that also owns

PSA Peugeot. "Our brand will serve at the forefront as Stellantis transforms to deliver clean mobility and connected customer experiences," Chris Feuell, CEO of the Chrysler brand, said in a news release.

Stellantis last month an-



The Chrysler logo at the 2019 Pittsburgh International Auto Show is displayed on Feb. 14, 2019.

Associated Press

nounced a strategy to embed AI-enabled software in 34 million vehicles across its 14 brands in a bid to gain \$22.6 billion (20 billion euros) in annual revenue by 2030. It's part of a broad transformation in the auto industry, as companies race toward

more fully electric and hybrid propulsion systems, more autonomous driving features and increased connectivity in cars.

All top automakers are working on electric vehicles amid concerns about climate change. □



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CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

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monks

11 Dwelling

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wife23 Mob
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32 Skilled

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neighbor

38 "Hush!"

40 Nepal
neighbor

43 Eat away

44 Perfume

45 Did some
tailoring

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SHOT	EVINCE
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Yesterday's answer

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1-7

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONG FELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three Ls, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-7

CRYPTOQUOTE

G C T E T G I D F N H I C D T Z N B N I F
I W G T F F P W K I T Q W W G
F D H W B K I N W M B W M Q T E I D F
I C D D U G N I D L D M I W E I C D
L W L D M I C T H R T H I I D O .

— GTSDII FWZDFI

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: ACCEPT WHAT PEOPLE OFFER. DRINK THEIR MILKSHAKES. TAKE THEIR LOVE. — WALLY LAMB



This 2020 photo provided by the British Antarctic Survey shows the Thwaites glacier in Antarctica. Associated Press

Scientists explore Thwaites, Antarctica's 'doomsday' glacier

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

A team of scientists is sailing to "the place in the world that's the hardest to get to" so they can better figure out how much and how fast seas will rise because of global warming eating away at Antarctica's ice. Thirty-two scientists on Thursday are starting a more than two-month mission aboard an American research ship to investigate the crucial area where the massive but melting Thwaites glacier faces the Amundsen Sea and may eventually lose large amounts of ice because of warm water. The Florida-sized glacier has gotten the nickname the "doomsday glacier" because of how much ice it has and how much seas could rise if it all melts — more than two feet (65 centimeters) over hundreds of years.

Because of its importance, the United States and the United Kingdom are in the midst of a joint \$50 million mission to study Thwaites, the widest glacier in the world by land and sea. Not near any of the continent's research stations, Thwaites is on Antarctica's western half, east of the jutting Antarctic Peninsula, which used to be the area scientists worried most about. "Thwaites is the main reason

I would say that we have so large an uncertainty in the projections of future sea level rise and that is because it's a very remote area, difficult to reach," Anna Wahlin, an oceanographer from the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, said Wednesday in an interview from the Research Vessel Nathaniel B. Palmer, which was scheduled to leave its port in Chile hours later. "It is configured in a way so that it's potentially unstable. And that is why we are worried about this." Thwaites is putting about 50 billion tons of ice into the water a year. The British Antarctic Survey says the glacier is responsible for 4% of global sea rise, and the conditions leading to it to lose more ice are accelerating, University of Colorado ice scientist Ted Scambos said from the McMurdo land station last month.

Oregon State University ice scientist Erin Pettit said Thwaites appears to be collapsing in three ways:

- Melting from below by ocean water.
- The land part of the glacier "is losing its grip" to the place it attaches to the seabed, so a large chunk can come off into the ocean and later melt.
- The glacier's ice shelf is breaking into hundreds of fractures like a damaged and scarred."□

car windshield. This is what Pettit said she fears will be the most troublesome with six-mile (10-kilometer) long cracks forming in just a year.

No one has stepped foot on the key ice-water interface at Thwaites before. In 2019, Wahlin was on a team that explored the area from a ship using a robotic ship but never went ashore.

Wahlin's team will use two robot ships — her own large one called Ran which she used in 2019 and the more agile Boaty McBoatface, the crowdfunded drone that could go further under the area of Thwaites that protrudes over the ocean — to get under Thwaites.

The ship-bound scientists will be measuring water temperature, the sea floor and ice thickness. They'll look at cracks in the ice, how the ice is structured and tag seals on islands off the glacier.

Thwaites "looks different from other ice shelves," Wahlin said. "It almost looks like a jumble of icebergs that have been pressed together. So it's increasingly clear that this is not a solid piece of ice like the other ice shelves are, nice smooth solid ice. This was much more jagged and scarred."□

France fines Google, Facebook millions over tracking consent



In this file photo dated Nov. 18, 2019, Google employees walk out of Google France building in Paris.

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — French regulators on Thursday fined Google and Facebook a total of more than 200 million euros (\$226 million) for not making it as easy for people to opt out of online tracking as it is for them to accept it.

The CNIL data privacy watchdog said its investigations found that while the U.S. online giants gave French users a single button to immediately accept cookies, there wasn't an equally simple way for them to decline because "several clicks are required to refuse all cookies."

Cookies are snippets of code used to target internet users for digital ads and other purposes. European governments have stricter regulations than the U.S. that require websites to ask for permission before track-

ing a user's activity. That means people face pop-up menus when they visit new websites, but there's been growing concern that many are configured to make it confusing or tedious if they don't want to give consent.

Visitors to Facebook, Google's French homepage and YouTube were being nudged to say yes, which meant they weren't freely giving their consent, a violation of French data protection rules, the CNIL said. The French watchdog slapped Google with a 150 million euro (\$170 million) penalty and Facebook with a 60 million euro (\$68 million) fine. It also threatened daily fines of 100,000 euros if they don't make it simpler for users in France to refuse cookies within three months.

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Caya G.F.
High Rise Homes
Royal Plaza Mall
L.G. Smith Boulevard
Weststraat
Weststraat
Bus terminal

Facebook, which has been renamed Meta, said it's reviewing the decision and is committed to working with authorities.

"Our cookie consent controls provide people with greater control over their data, including a new settings menu on Facebook and Instagram where people can revisit and manage their decisions at any time, and we continue to develop and improve these controls," the company said.

Google said: "People trust us to respect their right to privacy and keep them safe. We understand our responsibility to protect that trust and are committing to further changes and active work with the CNIL in light of this decision."

Cookies have been a long-standing source of privacy concerns because they can be employed to track users across the internet. They can be used to help remember someone's web-

site log-in details or more controversially, to record someone's web-browsing history to target personalized ads. The French penalty underscores a broader shift in the digital ad industry as Google and Facebook, which dominate the market, and regulators in Europe and the U.S. work on phasing out more egregious data collection practices. □



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2 Bed Ocean view \$16,500
2 Bed Garden view \$15,500
3 Bed Ocean view \$28,000
WK 51 Garden view \$42,500
WK 52 Oceanside \$55,000
WK 7 and 14 - all views

GOLD SEASON

2 Bed Oceanfront \$14,000
2 Bed Oceanside \$11,000
2 Bed Ocean view \$8,000
2 Bed Garden view \$6,000
3 Bed Ocean view \$13,000

Marriott Aruba Ocean Club

PLATINUM SEASON

2 Bed Oceanfront \$29,000
2 Bed Ocean view \$18,000
1 Bed ocean front \$13,000
1 Bed ocean View \$11,000

GOLD SEASON

2 Bed Oceanfront \$14,000
2 Bed Ocean view \$9,500
1 Bed oceanfront \$9,000
1 Bed ocean View \$6,500

** Destination Points \$8.00 per point

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2 bed wk 11 unit 101 ground floor
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Review: A solid if by-the-numbers spy thriller in 'The 355'

By LINDSEY BAHR

AP Film Writer

It's always a little suspect when too much is made of a big action movie being "female-fronted." Unfortunately, Hollywood has decided lately that in course correcting for decades of gender inequity in certain genres that it's not enough to just make an action-packed movie starring more than one woman: They must let the audience know that they know that this is A Girl Power Moment. And frankly, whether it's the lady Avengers assembling in "Infinity War," a montage of Girls Doing Sports and Science in the latest "Charlie's Angels," or all of "Ocean's 8," it's never not insulting to its purported audience.

There have been subtler, cleverer and just plain better efforts at bringing women to the forefront of so-called male genres (from "Widows" to "Spy"), but it's hard not to go into something like "The 355," which has been written about as a female "Jason Bourne" meets "Mission: Impossible" for over four years, a little wary. We've been burned before, no matter how many Oscar nominees are on the poster. And this one is dripping in photogenic talent, with Jessica Chas-



This image provided by Universal Pictures shows Penelope Cruz as Graciela, Jessica Chastain as Mason "Mace" Brown, Diane Kruger as Marie and Lupita Nyong'o as Khadijah in a scene from "The 355," co-written and directed by Simon Kinberg.

Associated Press

tain as a CIA agent, Diane Kruger as a German spy, Lupita Nyong'o as a former MI6 operative and Penélope Cruz as a Colombian psychologist who all find themselves searching for the movie's McGuffin.

"The 355," directed by Simon Kinberg ("X-Men: Dark Phoenix") who co-wrote with Theresa Rebeck ("Smash"), is not an instant classic by any means. It is, however, a straightforward and solidly entertaining spy thriller that (mostly)

avoids the impulse to pat itself on the back too obviously. Well, that is until a cringey "two months later" sequence at the end that leaves the door open for a welcome sequel. But there's enough good preceding that moment to almost excuse it and much of that has to do with its cast, which also includes Sebastian Stan, Edgar Ramírez and Bingbing Fan. The premise isn't groundbreaking and at times even a little predictable:

There's a microchip floating around that can access any closed system, and all the bad guys in the world want it. And there are many, many intelligence agencies trying to stop it from getting in the wrong hands. More than a few aren't just playing for one team either. As in most every spy movie for the past 50 years, there's talk of impending World War III, but no one is coming to this for original stakes.

And "The 355" hits all the ex-

pected beats ably, though at times it also makes you appreciate just how good a spoof Paul Fieg's "Spy" is. Their globetrotting brings them to sleek high-rises and crowded markets, they fight in hoodies and in heels, they find an excuse for our heroines to get glammed up at a major auction (all spies deserve at least one black tie affair in the middle of all the chaos), and they even get to share a beer and a few war stories. The main characters are a little simply drawn and you're bound to get sick of Chastain's nickname ("Mace"), but the actors give them enough depth to pass. Not only do you believe that these are all smart, capable women (who show you that instead of telling), they also all seem like they've all lived lives before the cameras started shooting them. Nyong'o, in particular, is a standout as the tech wiz who was trying to move on with her life. Kruger does a great job elevating her character beyond "angry, loner German." Cruz gets the short stick as the fish out of water, but she's still fun to have in the mix.

Mostly, "The 355" succeeds where others have come up short because it put the movie and the story first — not the message. □

Jennifer Garner named Hasty Pudding Woman of the Year



Jennifer Garner appears at the Baby2Baby Gala in West Hollywood, Calif., on Nov. 13, 2021.

Associated Press

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) — Jennifer Garner has been named Woman of the

Year by Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals, based not just on

her career as an actor, but also because of her record as a philanthropist and entrepreneur, the organization said Thursday.

Garner, 49, will be the guest of honor at a parade through Harvard Square, followed by a roast at which she will receive her pudding pot, the theater troupe said in a statement. Hasty Pudding Theatricals, which dates to 1844 and bills itself the third oldest theater group in the world, established its Woman of the Year award in 1951 to honor people who have made "lasting and impressive contributions to the world of entertainment." Last year's recipient was

Viola Davis, and previous winners include Meryl Streep, Katharine Hepburn, Ethel Merman and Cher.

The date of the parade, Feb. 5, is also opening night for the group's latest performance.

"We are thrilled to honor Jennifer Garner, who will be the first Woman of the Year to be honored on Opening Night," co-producer Molly Chiang said. "'13 Going on 30' was my go-to movie growing up, so I can't wait to meet her." Garner was nominated for several Primetime Emmys for her role as Sydney Bristow in the television spy series "Alias."

She has been lauded for her work in several movies including "Juno," "Dallas Buyers Club" and "13 Going on 30."

Garner is a Save the Children trustee and has advocated on Capitol Hill and around the nation to raise awareness and funds for the organization. She also co-founded the organic food company Once Upon a Farm in 2017, with a goal of providing children with the highest quality food grown using sustainable methods.

Jason Bateman, who played Garner's husband in the 2007 film "Juno," was named 2022 Man of the Year last month. □

Djokovic sinks Australian Open bid before it begins

By JIM LITKE
AP Sports Columnist

Novak Djokovic's abrupt exit from the Australian Open gives new meaning to the term "unforced error."

Just to be clear, Djokovic could have steered clear of the entire mess by getting vaccinated like Rafa Nadal, his greatest rival, and just about all the other players, officials, staff members and even fans who set foot inside Melbourne Park when the tournament begins Jan. 17. Or like the "handful" of other players that Australian Open director Craig Tiley acknowledged were also granted exemptions, he could have simply shown up, shut up and kept his fingers crossed hoping that nobody noticed.

Instead, just before his flight from Dubai to Australia, Djokovic bragged about it on Twitter.

"I've spent fantastic quality time with loved ones over break & today I'm heading Down Under with an exemption permission," Djokovic wrote. "Let's go 2022."

Not so fast.

Djokovic is almost unbeatable at tennis, but politics is a whole other game. By the time he landed at Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport, a nation that endured months-long lockdowns and kept its border closed until recently was spitting mad. Suddenly, his exemp-



Serbia's Novak Djokovic holds the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup after defeating Russia's Daniil Medvedev in the men's singles final at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2021.

Associated Press

tion wasn't worth the paper it was printed on.

"The rule is very clear," Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Thursday. "You need to have a medical exemption. He didn't have a valid medical exemption. We make the call at the border, and that's where it's enforced."

That explained how Djokovic wound up cooling his heels at the airport overnight. Apparently, the quality and variety of the concession stands there were not to his liking since Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic – who spoke with Djokovic at one point –

went on Instagram and demanded "the harassment of the best tennis player in the world be stopped in the shortest possible time."

How long it goes on, though, depends on whether and on what grounds Djokovic appeals the Australian Border Force decision. The Melbourne newspaper The Age quoted sources claiming that Djokovic sought an exemption because he'd contracted COVID-19 in the previous six months. If true, the court case won't stretch on for long. The Age also reported that federal health authorities informed tournament director Craig

Tiley on two previous occasions in writing that any exemption based on a prior infection would not be approved for quarantine-free entry.

"If that evidence is insufficient," Morrison said, "then he won't be treated any different to anyone else, and he'll be on the next plane home."

Asked whether Djokovic was being singled out, Morrison conceded other players with the same exemption and visa may have slipped into the country. But at least they were smart enough not to announce it. "When you get people

making public statements about what they say they have, and they're going to do," Morrison said, "they draw significant attention to themselves."

Djokovic's on-court outbursts in the past, as well as his opposition to vaccine mandates and problematic pronouncements on science and medicine have landed him in hot water before. Eighteen months ago, while the coronavirus raged, he organized a tennis exhibition back home in Belgrade that was cancelled after Djokovic and three other participants tested positive. You'd think he would have learned that lesson before now.

"I think if he wanted," Nadal said when asked about Djokovic, "he would be playing here in Australia without a problem. He went through another – he made his own decisions, and everybody is free to take their own decisions, but then there are some consequences, no?"

Yes.
And like it or not, the people who run sports have been forced to choose sides in the ongoing public debate about vaccinations and pressed on how to handle a pandemic that waxes and wanes with maddening unpredictability. So it comes as little surprise that their decisions haven't always been satisfying or consistent. □

U.S. check to WADA comes with memo: 'Sorry state of affairs'

By EDDIE PELLS

DENVER (AP) — The U.S. government paid its remaining \$1.3 million in dues to the World Anti-Doping Agency but delivered a brusque message along with the check, calling its absence from the regulator's top decision-making boards a "sorry state of affairs." WADA announced having received the money Thursday, and President Witold Banka called the release of the funds a sign of support from the U.S. government.

But a pair of letters written by the director of the White

House drug control office, Rahul Gupta, and obtained by The Associated Press, revealed the money was given despite major misgivings about both the way WADA operates and America's standing within the agency.

The government has been critical of WADA for not moving urgently enough to reform itself in the wake of the Russian doping scandal that has upended international sports for most of the past decade. Gupta also highlighted the United States' absence from WADA's executive committee

and foundation board, the two bodies that make the biggest decisions, despite the country's outsized financial impact on the Olympic movement.

"Frankly, as I have learned more about the Americas distribution of WADA Board seats I have become more and more concerned by this sorry state of affairs," Gupta wrote this week in a letter to Banka.

Gupta noted that the U.S. is absent from the 38-person foundation board for the first time since 2000, the year after WADA was founded. □



Dr. Rahul Gupta, the director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, is shown at the White House, Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press



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